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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/560,170	04/28/2000	Mark D. Levitt	103-1345.00	3695

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EXAMINER

AHMED, SHEEBA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1773

DATE MAILED: 03/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/560,170	LEVITT ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Sheeba Ahmed	1773	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 January 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-51 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-19 and 28-38 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 20-27 and 39-51 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Amendments to the Specification have been entered in the above-identified application. **Claims 1-51 are now pending with claims 20-27 and 39-51 now under consideration.**

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. Claims 41-46 and 49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

Independent claim 41 and dependent claim 49 now recite that the strippable laminate finish kit comprises "a strip agent-permeable polymerizable topcoat comprising water and at least about 15 wt.% solids" however there is no support for such an amendment in the original disclosure. Page 8, lines 16-20 of the Specification state that kit contains the topcoat that could be packaged as concentrates intended to be "mixed with water or another suitable solvent at about a 15 to 40% solids level" and as pointed out by the Applicants, Formulations A and B in Table 3 on Page 14 allow for the

Art Unit: 1773

formulation to contain about 47% solids. Hence, there is no support for a topcoat having more than 47% solids and the phrase "at least 15 wt.% solids" includes compositions comprising more than about 47 wt. % solids. Appropriate correction or clarification is required.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 20-27 and 39-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Independent claims 20 and 41 recite a laminate finish kit comprising **one or more containers** of an intermediate coating and a topcoat formulation. It is unclear from the Specification and the claims whether the intermediate coating and topcoat are in the same container or different containers. Are the intermediate coating and the topcoat formulation in the same container when there is only one container?

Appropriate clarification or amendment is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. Claims 20, 22-24, 27, 39, 41-45, and 47-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamrock et al. (WO 98/11168) in view of Holman et al. (US 6,444,134 B1).

Art Unit: 1773

Hamrock et al. disclose a floor finishing system (***corresponding to the strippable laminate finish kit of the claimed invention***) comprising a radiation curable composition and a primer composition (***corresponding to the intermediate coating of the claimed invention***) wherein the primer composition is coatable over a substrate and the radiation curable composition (***corresponding to the topcoat of the claimed invention***) is coatable thereon (Page 6, lines 25-30). The radiation curable coating comprises a polyfunctional isocyanurate and a hydroxyalkyl acrylate (Page 4, lines 21-30). A preferred monomer is shown on Page 5 and contains an aromatic group (***thus meeting the limitations that the topcoat composition comprises an acrylated urethane or an aromatic urethane***). The cured, coatable composition is readily strippable from the substrate when the latex primer is present (Page 7, lines 1-3).

Hamrock et al. do not specifically teach that the radiation curable coating (*i.e., the coating corresponding to the top of the claimed invention*) is water borne or that it comprises water.

However, Holman et al. disclose a method of finishing floors wherein the floor may be coated with a water based finish including urethane and acrylic polymers and copolymers and crosslinking agents (Column 2, lines 1, lines 5-6 and Column 2, lines 3-5). Examples of the polymers include aliphatic urethanes, urethane/acrylic polymers and acrylic polymers and these polymers/copolymers are designed for high performance uses, where hardness, flexibility, UV resistance, chemical resistance and abrasion resistance are desired. One specific example of the urethane/acrylic copolymer is a

Art Unit: 1773

high solids, radiation curable, water-borne formulation by the trade name of NEORAD 3709 (Column 4, lines 11-36). Preferably, the coating compositions have a solids content of 30-70 wt.% based on the total weight of the composition (Column 4, lines 1-5).

Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to replace the radiation curable coating comprising a polyfunctional isocyanurate and a hydroxyalkyl acrylate, as taught by Hamrock et al., with a water based finish including urethane and acrylic polymers and copolymers and crosslinking agents given that Holman et al. specifically teach that such water-borne coatings exhibit high hardness, flexibility, UV resistance, chemical resistance and abrasion resistance. With regards to the limitation that the polymerized topcoat can be at least partially stripped from the tile in 30 minutes and that the intermediate coating has a stripability rating of 6 or more on a 7 point scale and that the topcoat has a stripability of 4 on a 7 point scale, the Examiner takes the position that such limitations must be met by the coatings taught by Hamrock and Holman given that the chemical composition of these coating and that of the claimed invention are identical.

4. Claim 21 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamrock et al. (WO 98/11168) in view of Holman et al. (US 6,444,134 B1) and Koreltz et al. (WO 94/22965).

Hamrock et al. and Holman et al., as discussed above, do not teach that the floor finishing system (***corresponding to the strippable laminate finish kit of the claimed invention***) further comprises a strip agent.

Art Unit: 1773

However, Koreltz et al. disclose compositions used to strip coatings such as floor finishes and/or greasy residues from surfaces such as floors and the composition is effective in removing multiple coatings comprising urethane/acrylic polymers (Page 1, lines 5-9 and Page 3, lines 35-37).

Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to add the strip composition disclosed by Koreltz et al. to the floor finishing system disclosed by Hamrock et al. given that such compositions can be used to remove multiple coatings comprising urethane/acrylic polymers.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed on January 2, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants traverse the rejection of claims 41-46 and 49 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement, and submit that those skilled in the art would recognize that in the absence of adjuvants the topcoat would normally contain 100% solids and that topcoats containing water but at a lower level than in Formulation A and B would be workable and merely represent a lower degree of dilution than shown for Formulations A and B. The Examiner disagrees. The original disclosure does not teach a topcoat formulation of 100% solids. Page 8, lines 16-20 of the Specification simply state that the kit contains the topcoat that could be packaged as ***concentrates intended to be "mixed with water or another suitable solvent at about a 15 to 40% solids level"***. In other words, the topcoat can be a

Art Unit: 1773

concentrate and is capable of being diluted to 15 to 40% solids level however an upper percent solids content has not been specifically recited for the topcoat concentrate and the Examiner takes the position that a 100% solids content is not explicitly or implicitly taught by the original disclosure. Furthermore, the issue here is not whether a 100% solids topcoat formulation can be diluted down to any workable degree of dilution – rather the issue is whether there is support for a topcoat having more than 47% solids and the phrase “at least 15 wt.% solids” includes compositions comprising more than about 47 wt. % solids.

Applicants traverse the rejection of independent claims 20, 27, and 41 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamrock et al. (WO 98/11168) in view of Holman et al. (US 6,444,134 B1) and submit that Hamrock et al. teach away from topcoats made using available finishes that are waterborne or that comprise water. Applicants further state that there is no motivation for a person of ordinary skill to combine these references.

In response to Applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the Examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to replace the radiation curable

Art Unit: 1773

coating comprising a polyfunctional isocyanurate and a hydroxyalkyl acrylate, as taught by Hamrock et al., with a water based finish including urethane and acrylic polymers and copolymers and crosslinking agents given that Holman et al. specifically teach that such water-borne coatings exhibit high hardness, flexibility, UV resistance, chemical resistance and abrasion resistance. Furthermore, the Examiner disagrees that Hamrock et al. teach away from topcoats made using available finishes that are waterborne or that comprise water given that the proposed modification does not render the prior art invention being modified unsatisfactory for its intended purpose.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 25, 26, and 40 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sheeba Ahmed whose telephone number is (571)272-1504. The examiner can normally be reached on Mondays and Thursdays from 8am to 6pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Thibodeau can be reached on (571)272-1516. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 1773

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheeba Ahmed', is written over the printed name.

Sheeba Ahmed

Art Unit 1773

March 16, 2004